

Message Text

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13

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NIC-01 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 CU-04 DRC-01

/133 W

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R 120615Z DEC 73

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8965

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJECT: PEOPLE'S DAILY LOOKS AT TUCHUAN MOUNTAIN

REF: HONG KONG 11167

SUMMARY. AN OPERA WHICH APPEARS TO ALLUDE TO "CONTRADICTIONS" BETWEEN CHIANG CHING AND PREMIER CHOU IS RECEIVING A NEW WAVE OF REVIEWS THAT PUT SUCH STRUGGLE IN A COMRADELY PERSPECTIVE.

END SUMMARY.

1. PEOPLE'S DAILY IS DOING A BROAD DOUBLE-TAKE OVER THE PERSONAL INNUENDOES OF THE OPERA "TUCHUAN MOUNTAIN" (REFTEL). A SECOND WAVE OF REVIEWS STARTED AFTER THE PARTY CONGRESS IN AUGUST AND HAS PICKED UP MOMENTUM JUST RECENTLY.

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2. THE EPISODE OF THE SANDALS WHICH APPEARS TO KEY THE OPERA

TO A CURRENT STRUGGLE BETWEEN CHIANG CHING AND CHOU HAS NOW BEEN SINGLED OUT FOR ATTENTION BY PEOPLE'S DAILY. CAPTIONED "SANDALS EXPRESS DEEP FEELINGS," A VIGNETTE IN THE DECEMBER 6 ISSUE INTERPRETS THE HEROINE'S (CHIANG CHING'S) GIVING OF SANDALS TO THE PEASANT PARTISANS AS SHOWING HER FOND CONCERN FOR THEM. IT SHOWS THAT SHE FEELS ON INTIMATE TERMS WITH THEM, PARTICULARLY WITH THEIR LEADER (CHOU) FOR WHOM SHE MAKES A SPECIAL PAIR BECUASE HE HAS BIG FEET.

3. THE VIGNETTE IS SET, JEWEL-LIKE, IN A FULL PAGE DISCUSSION OF THE OPERA. THE LONGER, LEAD ARTICLE CALLS ATTENTION TO THE UNIQUENESS OF THE OPERA IN ITS DISPLAY OF CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN HEROIC CHARACTERS (SEE HONG KONG A-306). THIS, IT SAYS, IS A DARING BUT COMMENDABLE THING TO DO IN THEATRE. A THIRD ARTICLE IS ENTITLED "TAKE FACTUAL DESCRIPTION AS THE DOMINANT FACTOR, COMBINE FACTUAL AND FICTITIOUS WRITING."

4. PEOPLE'S DAILY BEGAN ITS BUILDUP TO THIS REEXAMINATION OF "TUCHUAN MOUNTAIN" WITH A LENGTHY TREATMENT ON NOVEMBER 26 IN WHICH IT MADE THE POINT THAT THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE HEROINE AND THE HERO IS ACUTE BUT WITHIN A LIMITED SCOPE--BETWEEN THE PARTY'S CORRECT LINE (HERS) AND THE NARROW-MINDED IDEA OF REVENGE (HIS). THE HERO, FOR ALL HIS MISTAKES, IS DESCRIBED AS "STILL" LOVABLE. ("BUT THIS CHARACTER MAKES PEOPLE FEEL THAT HE IS STILL WORTHY OF RESPECT AND LOVE.") SAID OF CHOU, THAT SMACKS OF SLY LESE MAJESTE.

5. THE NEW SHANGHAI POLITICAL JOURNAL (HONG KONG 11953) HAS HAD A CONSPICUOUS HAND IN THIS NEW LOOK AT "TUCHUAN MOUNTAIN." AN ARTICLE IN ITS SECOND ISSUE (OCTOBER) FOCUSED SHARPLY ON IDENTIFYING THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE HEROINE AND THE HERO AS THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE OPERA, AND SAID FLATLY THAT IT IS ROOTED IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL STRUGGLE IN CHINA. THE SANDALS EPISODE IS ALSO MENTIONED HERE, BUT ONLY IN PASSING.

6. CHIANG CHING'S PUBLIC REEMERGENCE AND FLURRY OF APPEARANCES WITH CHOU OVER LAST WEEKEND TAKES ON ADDED INTEREST AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND (HONG KONG 12392). IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SHE HAS DUELED WITH CHOU TO THE POINT OF SUCH OPEN EMBARRASSMENT WITHIN THE REGIME THAT AN ATTEMPT TO PUT THEIR QUARREL IN SOME COMRADELY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PERSPECTIVE IS DEEMED NECESSARY. IF THAT IS THE CASE, HOWEVER, PEOPLE'S DAILY STOPS SHORT OF FORTHRIGHT PEACEMAKING. ITS RECENT COMMENTS ON THE OPERA DO NOTHING TO RETRIEVE THE GAUNTLET THAT HAS BEEN THROWN, AND EVEN SEEM TO NUDGE IT WITH A POINTED TOE. OSBORN

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